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RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE.

DIE RELIGIÖSE ENTWICKLUNG DER MENSCHHEIT IM SPIEGEL DER WELTLITTERATUR. Zusammenhängende Einzelbilder von verschiedenen Verfassern. Herausgegeben von L. WEBER. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1901. Pp. x + 555. M. 6.

It is indeed a noble undertaking to depict the development of religion as it is reflected in the literature of mankind, and the thirty-seven essays of this volume are a valuable contribution to such an undertaking. Seven of them treat of the religious development in the pre-Christian period. Zöckler discusses the religion of the ancient Arians, of the Mongolians, of the Babylonians and Assyrians, and of the Egyptians; Blass, the religion of the Greeks and of the Romans. Mumm treats of Buddhism, and Orelli of the religion of Israel; while the editor describes the disintegration of the Græco-Roman paganism. The second part treats of the Christian period, and consists of thirty essays, beginning with New Testament Christianity and closing with the un-Christian and anti-Christian philosophies of the present time. The great defect of the volume is its lack of proportion. Of the thirty-seven essays, more than half are taken up with German literature. There is, indeed, a very fine essay on the Italian literature of the Middle Ages by Vowinckel, and one not quite so good upon Protestantism in English literature by Samtleben. But the essay of the latter writer upon the Christian and anti-Christian literature of recent times in France and England is glaringly inadequate. Think of omitting Balzac and including Ohnet; of omitting Tennyson and Browning and Matthew Arnold and Herbert Spencer, while including Edward Bulwer Lytton and Rudyard Kipling! Stein's essay upon Russian literature is a fine piece of work, and so, in the main, is Paulsen's discussion of the latest realism. Ibsen, to be sure, is hardly understood, and Björnson is not mentioned. There is, moreover, an inclination to denounce which is not altogether illuminating. Modern realism is a very serious phenomenon, especially in its bearing upon religious life; however severely the critic may condemn the excesses of it, his chief task is to explain it, and this must be done with a tranquil mind. The essays upon German literature, twenty-two in all, are of very unequal merit. Stein's upon the old German literature, and Tschackert's upon

Luther and Melancthon, are excellent; so are those of Lemme upon Kant's philosophy and Schleiermacher's theology. Rocholl contributes a fine paper upon Goethe. The editor asks indulgence for his numerous contributions to the volume, fifteen in all; and not without reason. Hegel's philosophy and the "Tendencies of Contemporary Thought" required treatment by an abler hand, or rather a larger mind. Nevertheless, Weber must be praised for having perceived so clearly what is too often overlooked, the importance of the religious aspects of the world's literature.

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LETTERS ON LIFE. By "CLAUDIUS CLEAR." New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1901. Pp. 277. \$1.75.

IN subject-matter these twenty-seven brief essays remind us of Lecky's admirable *Map of Life, Conduct, and Character*. But "Claudius Clear" writes in a lighter vein than Lecky and goes less deeply into casuistry. The style in *Letters on Life* nears perfection. Not a page is dull, while many sparkle with gems of rare literary beauty. The best essays are "The Art of Taking Things Coolly," "Vanity and its Mortifications," and "Concerning Order and Method." But the others, any of them, will richly repay perusal even by the busiest. The book contains just one unclear sentence, which is this: "James Payn has told us how men used to come to him, and at a certain stage of the conversation move their hands toward the breast pocket of their shabby coats and extract a letter from the Chief Persons who write letters asking favors from those to whom they are strangers should construct silence charitably" (pp. 150, 151). The spirit of the book is above praise. Most of the advice it contains is fresh and stimulating as well as sane. A few of the admonitions are trite, but even these are so racily presented that they are as good as new. For philosophy the author has only common-sense. This usually stands him in good enough stead, though here and there are implicit contradictions which deeper insight might have avoided. Thus, "Firing out the Fools," in the way the author advocates, would certainly promote "The Sin of Overwork," which he deprecates. Two choice bits of poetry cited in the volume (pp. 23, 78) are by themselves worth its price.

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